

Black Butte inks McCance as new CEO

By Bill Bartlett
Correspondent

Shawn McCance, who has served as Black Butte Ranch's CFO since May of 2018 and its interim CEO since the departure of Jay Head last summer, has been named chief executive officer, effective immediately.

McCance, after serving a couple of months as interim, was encouraged to seek the position. He realized that, while he's steeped in the finance and accounting side of resort management, the role of CEO was equally compatible with his skill sets.

"It was not a slam dunk, even though I was a known entity," McCance said when *The Nugget* interviewed him shortly after his appointment was made public last week. "I had to be vetted by the outside search consultants like all the other candidates, of which there were a number highly qualified. That included the interesting process of being interviewed by colleagues here at the Ranch."

Apparently his coworkers were, like the board with whom McCance has worked closely, favorably disposed to making his temporary gig permanent.

"I feel honored and supported," he said.

He came to Black Butte from Auberge Resorts Collection, whose portfolio includes Pronghorn, a high-end property in Bend.

He and his wife, who have raised seven children, have lived in Bend eight

years. They came to Central Oregon from Colorado, where McCance also worked as a finance executive at Viceroy Snowmass. His early work in Colorado was as CFO of Arrowhead Conference Resorts. He started as a staff accountant for a CPA in Omaha in 1987. Ever since he has been in financial leadership in the high-end and luxury resort industry.

McCance is a graduate of Creighton University, where he earned a BSBA in accounting in 1987. While he is at home with numbers and budgets, several owners *The Nugget* encountered at the Ranch's Bistro are well pleased with his selection to manage the sprawling operation.

"Shawn's not an extrovert but is approachable and listens," one homeowner told us. Another said, "He's a team player who will be good at his job and able to see the big picture."

Big is an adequate descriptor. At 8.22 square miles, the prestigious 50-year-old resort and community is four times the physical size of Sisters. It maintains its own fire and police services for the 1,253 housing units, approximately 400 of which are occupied year-round. During the tourist season, as many as 5,000 people are on the Ranch property on any given day.

We asked McCance what his biggest challenges would be as CEO.

"Wildfire mitigation and staffing, and for 2022,

construction of the new 22,100-square-foot lodge and event center," he answered.

The old lodge was deconstructed last fall. Its replacement won't come online until 2023, putting a dent in wedding and other social event income for this year. Design and construction itself is a \$12-million-plus undertaking, one of the largest single-structure projects in Sisters Country.

"Inflation is hurting us badly," McCance said. "Gas especially, since the majority of our workforce drive from Redmond or Bend."

He spoke with *The Nugget* at length regarding staffing shortages, not just hiring new workers but retaining the best of their staff, who are living with the nearly \$4 per gallon fuel expense. These workers are in high demand by other, closer resorts like Eagle Crest and Brasada Ranch.

The Ranch employs close to 120 permanent workers, and in season that number jumps to between 350 and 400.

The continuing drought worries McCance and his firefighters. The Ranch has recently been certified as a Firewise USA community largely through the efforts of ad hoc community members who are now leading the charge to have each Ranch property more defensible against wildfire.

McCance's commute takes about 40 minutes each way from Bend, where he has a small parcel of land on which he is raising three black angus steers. Perhaps



PHOTO PROVIDED

Shawn McCance moves from interim to full-time CEO at Black Butte Ranch.

surprisingly, and unlike his predecessor, McCance, 55, won't be burning up his Resort's links.

"I'm a pretty poor golfer," he admitted.

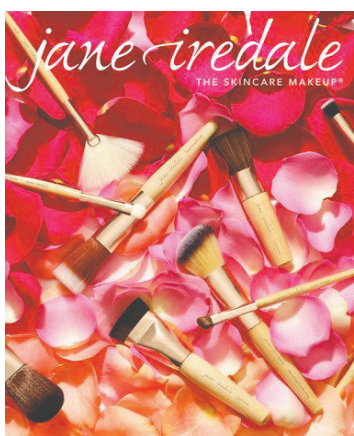
Still, he plays occasionally

with a group who do not keep score.

With the challenges McCance articulated, it's doubtful he will find much time for golf this year, keeping score or not.

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